

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3782

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1666

E.O. 11652; GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S RULE IN TAMILNAD - CENTER CHARGES DMK
MALADMINISTRATION

REF: AMCONSUL MADRAS 190

SUMMARY: THE REPORT OF THE TAMIL NADU GOVERNOR TABLED IN PARLIAMENT ON FEBRUARY 2 DETAILS CHARGES OF MALADMINISTRATION AND CORRUPTION AGAINST THE FORMER DMK ADMINISTRATION. THE CENTER ANNOUNCED A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY, HEADED BY THE A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, WHICH IS TO REPORT BY FEBRUARY 1, 1977. THE LONGER TERM IMPORTANCE OF PRESIDENT'S RULE IN TAMILNAD IS THAT IT MAY INCREASE REGIONAL SUSPICION AND MAY INJURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. TAMILNAD'S GOVERNOR K.K. SHAH IN HIS REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT DATED FEBRUARY 2 CHARGED THE DMK ADMINISTRATION WITH MALADMINISTRATION,

CORRUPTION AND MISUSE OF POWER FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL ENDS. IN WHAT AMOUNTS TO A BILL OF PARTICULARS, SHAH SET FORTH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC CHARGES (WITH DETAILS): (1) MAJOR CONTRACTS
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ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN ONLY TO FAVORED CONTRACTORS.

(2) DROUGHT

FUNDS WERE MISUSED. (3) THERE WERE GRAVE MALPRACTICES IN THE SALE OF PADDY. (4) ADMISSION TO MEDICAL COLLEGES WAS BY BRIBE. OTHER CHARGES INCLUDED: "DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO THWART THE BASIC OBJECTIVES ON A NATIONAL POLICY, DISREGARD OF THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN RELATION TO THE EMERGENCY AND MISUSE OF EMERGENCY POWERS."

2. THE GOVERNOR'S REPORT DETAILED THE FOLLOWING (AS WELL AS OTHER) ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPROPRIETIES:

A. "A RENOWNED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY INSTITUTION AT VELLORE WAS SUBJECTED TO COERCION THROUGH THE POLICE AND OFFICIAL MACHINERY DUE TO A PERSONAL VENDETTA."

B. THE STATE GOVERNMENT DID NOT FAITHFULLY CARRY OUT CENSORING WORK ACCORDING TO GUIDELINE ISSUED BY THE CENTER. THIS RESULTED IN THE FREE CIRCULATION OF A LOT OF LITERATURE INCLUDING NEWSPAPERS CONTAINING EXHORTATIONS AND PUBLIC SPEECHES HIGHLY CRITICAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURES."

C. VERY FEW ACTIVITIES OF BANNED ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN "APPREHENDED" AND INADEQUATE STEPS TAKEN TO PUT DOWN THE CIRCULATION OF CLANDESTINE LITERATURE.

D. DEFENCE OF INDIA RULES (DIR) AND THE INTERNAL SECURITY OF INDIA RULES, 1971, HAVE BEEN MISUSED TO MUZZLE NEWS MEDIA BELONGING TO OPPOSITION PARTIES.

D. "SOME OF THE DMK LEADERS HAVE ALREADY GIVEN A THREAT OF REVOLUTION IN TAMIL NADU IF THE LIFE OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY

IS NOT EXTENDED." THE CAMPAIGN OF THE DMK ENCOURAGES VIOLENCE AND RUNS COUNTER TO THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION.

3. THE GOVERNOR ALSO FOUND THAT DMK LEADERS INCLUDING THE CHIEF MINISTER AND OTHER MINISTERS HAVE HELD OUT VEILED THREATS OF SECESSION IN THE EVENT DESIRED AUTONOMY WAS NOT GRANTED. HE ADDED THAT "SINISTER COMPARISONS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLIC UTTERANCES WITH THE EVENTS IN BANGLADESH AND THE FATE OF MUJIBAR RAHMAN."

SHAH CONCLUDED HIS REPORT BY RECOMMENDING A HIGH-POWERED COMMISSION BE APPOINTED TO "INQUIRE INTO THE SEVERAL ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE (DMK) MINISTRY AND THE MINISTERS INVOLVED.

4. THE GOVERNOR'S REPORT WAS TABLED IN THE PARLIAMENT ON FEBRUARY 2 BY HOME MINISTER K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY IN THE LOK SABHA AND

MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS OM MEHTA IN THE RAJYA SABHA, (POUCHING TEXT TO NEA/INS AND INR/RNA). CONGRESS (O), CPI-M, DMK, AND SOCIALIST MPS REPORTEDLY PROTESTED AGAINST THE IMPOSITION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE. IN THE LOK SABHA BLD MEMBER H.M. PATEL SAID PRESIDENT'S RULE WAS UNWARRANTED. CPM MEMBER DINEN BHATTACHARYA FORMALLY OBJECTED TO PRESIDENT'S RULE. DEFENDING THE STEP, OM MEHTA SAID THE PROCLAMATION COULD IN NO WAY BE DESCRIBED AS AN ABUSE OF CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HE HAD HIMSELF SEEN HOW THE PRO-MERGISTS BELONGING TO THE CONGRESS (O) WERE KEPT AWAY FROM A MEETING BY DMK WORKERS. (WE UNDERSTAND

ONLY DMK MP WAS PRESENT) IN THE LOK SABHA.)

5. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, FEBRUARY 3, OM MEHTA ANNOUNCED A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY HEADED BY MR. JUSTICE R.S. SARKARIA OF THE SUPREME COURT HAD BEEN APPOINTED TO LOOK INTO THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU, M. KARUNANIDHI, AND SOME ON THE MEMBERS OF HIS DISMISSED MINISTRY. THE MINISTER TOLD THE LOK SABHA THAT 27 OF THE 54 ALLEGATIONS CONTAINED IN A MEMORANDUM BY ADMK CHIEF M.G. RAMACHANDRAN IN (272 AND A MEMORANDUM BY M. KALYENASUNDARAM, M.P., ON DECEMBER 1975 APPEARED, PRIMA FACIO, TO REQUIRE A PROBE AND HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO THE COMMISSION FOR INQUIRY. THE COMMISSION HAS A DEADLINE OF FEBRUARY 1, 1977.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1666

6. LITTLE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN DELHI TO SUPPLEMENT THAT PROVIDED BY CONGEN MADRAS (REFTEL). USUALLY RELIABLE SOUTH INDIAN NEWSPAPERMAN CLAIMS THAT GOI HOME MINISTRY HAS 80 PERCENT COMPLETED CASE AGAINST FORMER TAMILNAD CHIEF MINISTER KARUNANIDHI AND OTHER DMI MINISTERS AND THAT IT WAS EXPECTED CRIMINAL/CIVIL CHARGES WOULD BE BROUGHT AGAINST THEM AFTER FILES IN MADRAS WERE COMBED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. (UNLESS AS SOME BELIEVE ANY INCRIMINATING FILES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DESTROYED BY DMK MINISTERS). THE FEBRUARY 1977 DEADLINE FOR THE INQUIRY COMMISSION REPORT SUGGESTS PROSECUTION IS NOT HOWEVER, IMMINENT. DELHI SPECULATION ON TIMING FOR PM'S MOVE JANUARY 31, IS NOW CENTERING ON THREE THEMES: (1) DMK DID NOT EXPECT GOI TO MOVE THIS SWIFTLY AND WAS CAUGHT OFF-BASE WITH PLANS TO COUNTER POSSIBLE DECLARATION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE NOT YET WORKED OUT; (2) GOI WISHED TO AVERT ELECTION BY DMK-CONTROLLED LEGISLATURE OF FOUR MEMBERS OF THE RAJYA SABHA IN THE NEXT MONTH; (3) GOI DID NOT WISH TO BE FORCED TO JUSTIFY WHY TAMILNAD GOVERNMENT WAS NOT BEING ALLOWED TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE AFTER THE END OF ITS NORMAL TERM WHILE KERALA GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN, AND (4) GOI WAS DETERMINED TO VVYBFQ(#)

(#) ITS LEADERSHIP WHICH IS SEEN AS FUNDAMENTALLY
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SECESSIONIST, DESPITE CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY.

7. ONE SENIOR RETIRED GOI IAS OFFICER (WHO WAS CHIEF ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT IN GUJARAT DURING 1974 PRESIDENT'S RULE THERE) TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 2 HE THOUGHT ONE OF KEY TASKS FOR ADMINISTRATORS IN TAMILNAD UNDER PRESIDENT'S RULE WOULD BE TO REFORM EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WHICH HAD BECOME EXCLUSIVELY TAMIL LANGUAGE AND IN WHICH HINDI HAD NO PART, THEREBY UNDERCUTTING UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATION. THE TAMILNAD CASE HAS BROUGHT INTO THE OPEN A WHOLE SERIES OF SUCH PRIVATE COMMENTS BY NORTH INDIANS AND SOUTH INDIANS WHICH UNDERSCORE THAT OLD SUSPICIONS DIE SLOWLY. SEVERAL OF THE FORMER, WHILE PROTESTING THEIR GENERAL DISAPPROVAL OF MANY ASPECTS OF THE EMERGENCY, HAVE EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY OF PREVENTING THE GROWTH OF SEPARATIST ATTITUDES IN SOUTH INDIA. SEVERAL SENIOR SOUTH INDIAN GOI OFFICIALS, WHILE RESERVED IN THEIR COMMENT, WERE EVIDENTLY UNHAPPY OVER THE GOI ACTION. SOUTH INDIAN NEWSPAPERMAN (PARA 6) RECALLED A WHOLE SERIES OF ALLEGED SLIGHTS AND ACTS OF FAVORITISM FOR NORTH IN RECENT MONTHS, INCLUDING SHARP DECLINE IN NUMBER OF SOUTHERN JOINT SECRETARIES IN GOI MINISTRIES (WHICH HAS INDEED OCCURRED), PASSING OVER OF TWO SOUTHERN ADMIRALS FOR NAVAL CHIEF-OF-STAFF (ALSO TRUE), AND A STEADY DECLINE IN ACCEPTANCES INTO THE IAS OF SOUTHERN CANDIDATES OVER THE LAST 2-3 YEARS (OF WHICH WE ARE UNCERTAIN). SANJAY GANDHI IS ALLEGED TO BE "ANTI-SOUTH," AND

THIS IS SAID TO BE CAUSING SERIOUS CONCERN TO MANY SOUTH INDIANS.

8. THE LITERAL TRUTH OF THESE VARIANT FEELINGS IS LESS IMPORTANT,
OF COURSE, THAT THEY ARE BELIEVED TO BE TRUE. THE LONGER-TERM
IMPORTANCE OF THE GOI'S DECLARATION OF PRESIDENT'S RULE IN
TAMILNAD IS THAT IT MAY INCREASE REGIONAL SUSPICION AND MAY INJURE
THE INTEGRITY OF THE COUNTRY.
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